



Telephone Sales

Answers to Frequently Asked Questions

Now you've had a chance to see how a sample phone conversation might go with a potential new customer. You understand a little bit about the selling process, and, of course, the telephone sales aspect. Remember, the sole purpose of your telephone presentation is to stress some benefits of your service and excite the potential client about meeting with you.

You'll find that when people call you for the first time they generally have questions. Though the questions are worded differently, they will be fairly standardized as far as topic. We've given the basic question topics you may encounter, along with some sample ways the questions may be asked. We've also provided some possible answers to the various types of questions, however, as your service reflects your own personality and character, you should develop your own answers for them. The key is to listen carefully whenever a question is asked and then respond to the topic, not necessarily the specific question.

Cost. Examples of cost-related questions are: "How much does your service cost?" "How much does a meal cost?" "What's the price of your service?"

You want to respond in a manner that opens the door for you to meet with the potential client and give more information in person. A possible answer would be, "The cost of our meals, Mr. Jones, can be from nine or ten dollars per meal per person. It depends on the number of people I will be cooking for, how often we're cooking for you, how restrictive your diet is, the types of foods and cuisine styles you like, and how personalized you'd like us to make each of the recipes we decide on together. So, I need to meet briefly with you and your wife, discuss your needs and preferences and determine the cost to you based on those."

Food. Examples of food-related questions are: "What kind of food is this?" "What kind of meals do you prepare?" "Is it strictly casseroles?"

If you hear any question that deals with food, you might respond, "Well, Mr. Jones, each menu I prepare for each of my clients is a customized menu based upon the client's likes and dislikes. I have at my disposal a repertoire of hundreds of recipes covering every style and cuisine of food in the world. I personalize each individual recipe to your individual tastes. I can prepare whatever you'd like to see, from casserole dishes to gourmet, upscale, more continental comfort foods. I can cover that in more detail and show you some sample menus when we meet together."

Location. Examples of location-related questions are: "Do you have to cook the food in my home?" "Can't you cook the food in your home?" "Can't you just cook the food elsewhere and deliver it?"

A potential answer to this type of questions is, "Well, Mr. Jones, this is a very personalized service. Because of that, I like to prepare the foods in the customer's home. It is also a Health Department requirement. In order to prepare the food at some location other than your house, I would have to arrange for a commercial facility approved by the Health Department. That would increase my overhead and, consequently, I would have to charge more for the meals I prepare. Besides that, I like the personalization that I can provide when cooking in my clients' homes, and I've found that my clients appreciate the security of knowing that their food was prepared in their own kitchens. So, that's why I prepare the meals in your home."



Telephone Sales

Equipment. Examples of equipment-related questions are: "Do I have to provide the pots and pans?" "Do you use my utensils?" "Do you bring your own cooking equipment?" "What about spices?"

You might respond to any question that has to do with logistics or equipment something like this, "Allow me to explain, Mr. Jones, that I bring everything with me. You provide a stove, a sink, a microwave and a refrigerator, and I bring everything else. In fact, one of the nicest benefits of my business, which many of my clients enjoy, is that all they have to do is approve the menu and pay for the service. I take care of every other detail. You don't have to think about anything except what you're going to enjoy for dinner and when you're going to enjoy it."

Containers. Examples of container-related questions are: "Do I have to use my own containers?" "Do you supply the containers?" "Who pays for the containers?" "How is the food stored?"

An answer to questions dealing with containers or the storage of food might be, "That's a good question, Mr. Jones. I provide all of the containers, whether disposable or reusable. I have a one-time non-refundable setup fee of \$50 which pays for your reusable containers for the service, as well as any incidental supplies and the paperwork required to establish your account. Once that's done, that's all there is."

Trust. Examples of trust-related questions are: "Can I assume that you're insured and bonded?" "Are you bonded or do you have liability insurance?" "How are you going to gain access to my home?" "Do I have to be here when you're cooking?"

If any of those types of questions arise, the client is really asking, "Can you be trusted?" Your response might be, "I am the owner of this business and responsible for it. I do not have any employees with me, so I am the person with whom you'll be dealing. I carry liability insurance, and I'm licensed with the city. When we meet I will bring references that will assure you that, as the business owner, I will protect your property as if it were my own."

As you answer your potential clients' questions, don't forget to stress that you can give them more details when you meet with them. Put the suggestion in their minds that they will get much more information through meeting with you in person. We recommend that you write down all the topics discussed above with the answers you've prepared and have the information right by the phone. People will feel comfortable if the answer you give is something that is smooth and fluid and you don't make a big deal out of it. If you can do that, you can be really successful at setting the in-home appointments from telephone calls that generate excitement and enthusiasm for your business.